

W-2/CC/ES Coordination Subcommittee Minutes
March 18, 2004

Present: Jodi Ross, DHFS/BIMA; John Rathman, Outagamie County DHHS; Sara Edmonds, DHFS/BHCE; Michael Pomo, Milwaukee County DHHS; Pat Steliga, Milwaukee County DHHS; Laura Saterfield, DWD/Child Care Section; Rebecca Brueggeman, DWD/Child Care Section; Marilyn Putz, Kaiser Group/Walworth County; Shirley Kitchen, Dodge County; Shirley Ross, LaCrosse County; Tadesse Mengesha, DWD/DWS/WPS; Connie Hendries, Manitowoc County HSD.

WHEAP/ES Coordination

The committee's attempt to coordinate DOA's WHEAP program with ES programs is gaining momentum. Over five years ago a match was run that indicated only 25%-30% of WHEAP recipients were known to CARES. Committee members believe a current match would show increased participation in both WHEAP and CARES. Sara Edmonds and other DHFS and DOA staff are looking into the following questions:

- How much has EBD participation in WHEAP increased in the past five years for FS and MA recipients, by state and county?
- How many WHEAP recipients are known to CARES and how many are currently open for FS or MA?
- Is there a way to streamline the DX process workers currently must use to verify receipt of WHEAP for FS utility deduction purposes?
- Can WHEAP be included as a program in the PPG pre-screener and application project?
- Can the annual MA mail-in review include the WHEAP application and be optically imaged for local agencies?
- Why does WHEAP require three months of income? Could this be brought into alignment with ES programs?

Child Care

Laura Saterfield brought good news. Food Stamp and Child Care eligibility reviews will be synched in the not-too-distant future. Child Care reviews will be on a 12-month cycle (applause, applause). There will be a "mini-update" for changes at six months; it will be up to the worker to act on the reported changes. Work on the project will begin 7-1-04 when the IT contract switches from Deloitte-Touche to BITS. It is hoped that the project will be completed by 12-31-04. This project is initiated based on a WCHSA request which was approved by Bill Clingan.

Authorizations will continue to be for a maximum of six months and cannot be approved more than seven months into the future. The parent will receive a notice that the authorization is due and the parent will be responsible for requesting a renewed authorization from the local Child Care Coordinator. The child care authorization and payment process should be on the web by 2005.

Although the W-2 program is projected to have a \$3 to \$4 million shortfall this year, Child Care should just about break even. There will be no surplus next year. Last year there was a \$20 million surplus; in 2002 additional funds were needed. Milwaukee County spends from \$16 to \$20 million per month on child care. There is a growing concern over the lack of monitoring of child care usage vs. hours of employment. Some providers keep no attendance records so there are no documents for auditors to match against the attendance form submitted for payment. Providers who choose to enter their data on-line can be monitored prior to issuance if the County opts to do so. Milwaukee County has a team of auditors to review utilization and uncover fraud on the part of the providers. Regional Offices may monitor child care cases in the future.

There are plans for an automated overpayment process with simulation and an on-line worksheet to make it less labor-intensive. DHA has issued a decision that there is no administrative rule basis for the collection of child care overpayments. Legal counsel is investigating.

Change Centers

Change Centers are operational (or almost operational) in Dane, LaCrosse, Milwaukee, Outagamie and Washington Counties. Shirley Ross reported that customers love the change center; callers can reach a live person. Workers have difficulty relinquishing control, but enjoy returning from vacation without having to return 400 phone calls.

Complaint calls have been reduced by 75% in LaCrosse County since the Change Center was set up. Their Change Center staff take action on Data Exchanges in addition to phone and mail-in changes. Their assumption is that each worker can handle 60 calls per day. Four staff rotate through the Change Center working half days, with two staff always available.

Committee members complimented state staff on the workload improvements that have been instituted. We now need to be looking at enhancements to IT, phone systems, scanning, electronic (paperless) case files and other new ways to do business.

The BadgerCare employer verification information that is scanned into the system by the State and populates the CARES screens could also be used for Child Care and Child Support. This would relieve employers of having to fill out forms for three separate requests on the same individual.

Conferences

There was interest in holding another Workload Reduction Conference in the fall, focusing on technology, "webification," scanning, electronic case files, WAMS, host-on-demand, distance learning and other enhancements.

There will be an IT Conference June 9 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Plaza Hotel and Suites in Wausau. The target audience will be an IT and a program person from each agency.

Tip: When doing QCs check to see that the FEIN number has been entered on AFWG.

Connie Hendries